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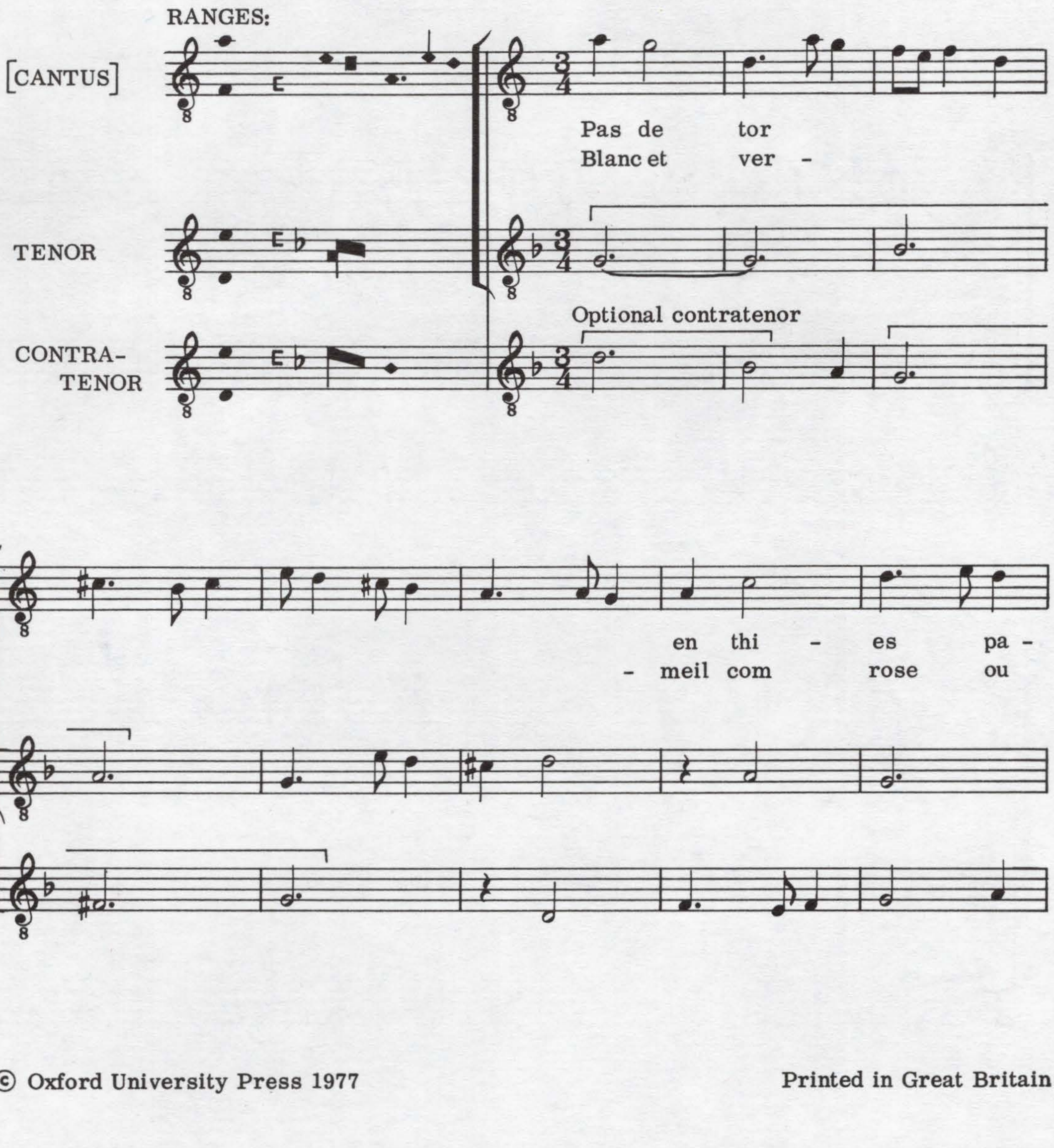
SEUR TOUTE CREATURE HUMEINNE

Edited by
Elizabeth A. Keitel

Guillaume de Machaut
(d. 1377)

RANGES:



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- is
lis

Qui
En

por - - tes
un es -

dou - - ceur et biau - te.
- cu de loy - au -

1

2

- te.

La clar - te de vos - tre

bon - - te Res - plent plus que la tres-mon-

- tein - ne Seur tou -

- te cre - a - ture hu - mein -

- ne.

TEXT	TRANSLATION
Pas[1] de tor en thies pais	There is no bull in the German country
Qui portes douceur et biaute	Which possesses gentleness and beauty
Blanc et vermeil, com rose ou lis	White and red, like a rose or lily
En un escu de loyaute	In one shield of loyalty.
La clarte de vostre bonte	The brightness of your goodness
Resplent plus que la tresmonteinne	Shines brighter than the North Star
Seur toute creature humeinne	Over all human creatures.
Gent corps cointe appert et faitis	Lovely body, graceful, delicate, and elegant
Maintieng plein de toute honneste	Bearing full of honour,
Se je vous aim serf[2] loe et pris	If I love, serve, praise, and prize you,
Nest merveilles quen verite	It is no wonder, for truly
Vous avez si tout[3] sourmonte	You have so surpassed everything
Que vous estes fleur souvereinne	That you are the sovereign flower
Seur toute creature humeinne	Over all human creatures.
Si seroie a tous jours garis	So would I be forever well
Ne jamais naroie griete	Nor would I ever have suffering
Se vos nobles cuers et gentis	If your noble and valiant heart
Courtois frans et pleins de pite	Courteous, generous, and full of pity,
Savoit que dumble volente	Knew that with humble will
Li miens de vous servir sepeinne	Mine (heart) takes pains to serve you
Seur toute creature humeinne	Over all human creatures.

1. Las (*B*)
2. sers (*M*)
3. tout si (*M*)

SOURCES

A:	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale,	Ms.f.fr.	1584, fol. 469'
B:	"		1585, fol. 311'
E:	"		9221, fol. 156
M:	" (text manuscript)		843, fol. 242
Vg:	New York, Wildenstein & Co. (formerly owned by the Marquis de Vogüé)		fol. 312'

TRANSCRIPTIONS

Friedrich Ludwig, ed. *Guillaume de Machaut; Musikalische Werke*, 4 vols., Leipzig, 1926-54; I, 33-34.

Leo Schrade, ed. *Polyphony of the Fourteenth Century, II-III*, Monaco, 1956; III, 116-17.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This ballade, known to listeners from the Pro Musica's album *The Romance of Medieval France*, has posed problems for its modern editors, for none of the extant manuscripts has the music in an uncorrupt state. The underlay of the second couplet, moreover, is misaligned in all the manuscripts, which, if taken literally, would result in singing the first melisma of the fourth line to the last or next-to-last word of the third. Assuming that the corresponding syllables in both couplets were to be sung to the same music, I have realigned the second couplet under the first, although such placing results unfortunately in a breve rest in the middle of the word *escu*.

Because the *contratenor* seems to be added as an afterthought in *A*, *Vg*, and *B*, it seems that the ballade should be treated as a two-voice work with optional *contratenor*. Stylistically it is very similar to other two-voice works -- especially to the equally haunting ballade *Je sui aussi*, which appears as a two-voice work in five manuscripts with a *contratenor* added to it in the sixth. (For other secular songs of Machaut's that may be performed with fewer voices than the largest number recorded, see Sarah Jane Williams, 'Vocal Scoring in the Chansons of Machaut', *American Musicological Society; Journal*, XXI (1968), 251-57.)

Editorial accidentals are applied conservatively so that the subtle shift in modes may be best emphasized. Only the E flats in the *cantus* and *tenor* in bars 25 and 52, and in the *contratenor* in bar 16, are not present in the manuscripts. The remainder of the applied accidentals (indicated by small type) are carried over from a previously-stated accidental or appear because the stated accidental no longer applies. No source has the penultimate C sharp recorded by Ludwig and Schrade in bar 28; *B* and *Vg*, however, do have a sharp on the B preceeding it, which I have ignored because of the conflicting B flat in the *tenor*.

Ludwig and Schrade note that bars 12-14 are missing in the *tenor* in all the manuscripts. (Ludwig has left the bars blank in his transcription, while Schrade has composed a supporting line for the *cantus*.) Because the manuscripts are full of minim tails darkened by later hands (many erroneously), I have entertained the possibility that the c.o.p. stroke in the tenor ligature is also mistaken. Where Ludwig and Schrade read it as ▬◆. (three semibreves, bar 11), I have read ▬◆. (long, breve, semibreve, bars 11-13), which, along with *A*'s semibreve rest and semibreve in the following bar, nicely occupies the 'missing' bars. Both editors relied on *A*'s version for the *cantus* in bar 22, which creates parallel octaves with the *tenor* in bar 23; the reading in *B*, *Vg*, and *E* is much more characteristic. The layout of the text in all the manuscripts, moreover, indicates that the *ouvert* is only of a breve's duration; the musical rhyme between the *clos* and end of the refrain is thus expanded, and the two larger parts of the ballade are now perfectly balanced. There are more discrepancies between all the sources, but I direct the reader to the commentaries by Ludwig and Schrade.

Because the existing ballade is in such a corrupt state in the different manuscripts, it is not surprising that it is the only ballade to be omitted in the largest manuscript, *F-G* (Bibliothèque nationale, Ms.f.fr. 22545-22546). Perhaps the scribe's substitution of a capital L for a P in the first word of *B*'s copy was not an error, but a comment on his frustration: Las!

Although this ballade is filled with clues, I am unable to find any fourteenth-century personality associated with a red and white shield containing a bull. The possibility that *tor* may mean *la tour*, or gate-tower, must be discounted because of the masculine descriptive adjectives. Gaston Raynaud suggested that the word *loyauté* may be symbolic for the colour blue, in which case that line should read 'on a field of blue' (*Romania*, XXXVIII (1909), 462). Because there seems to be a scarcity of bulls used in fourteenth-century heraldry, I have come to think that Machaut may have been describing a character trait or using the word as a pun. Any suggestions will be warmly received.

I would like to thank Sarah Jane Williams for her help with portions of the translation, and for her observation that the beginning of the second stanza is very similar to the ballade in the *Voir Dit*, 'Gent corps, faitis, cointe, apert et joli'.

Elizabeth A. Keitel

EM31 Seur toute créature humeinne MACHAUT

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